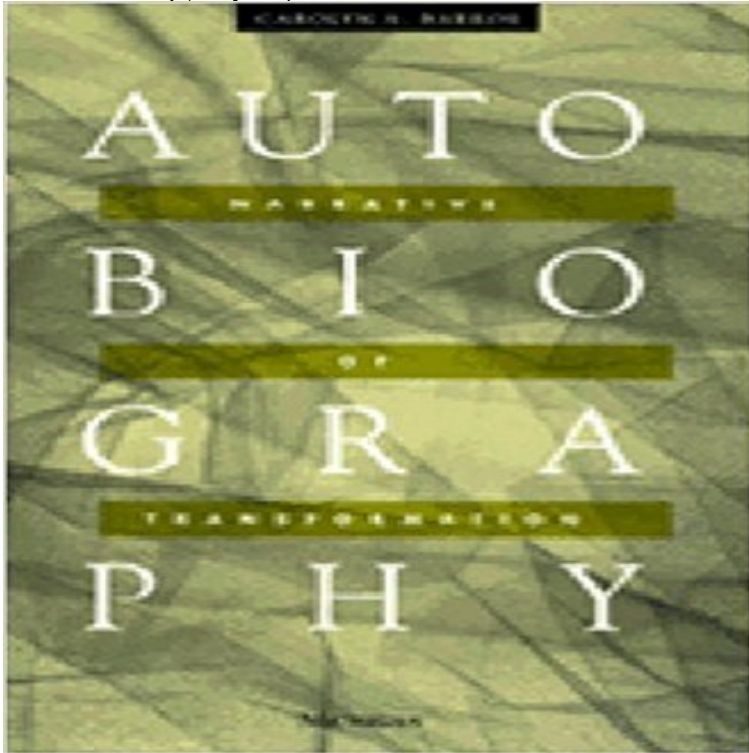


Autobiography: Narrative of Transformation



In *Autobiography: Narrative of Transformation*, Carolyn Barros creates a primer for the study of autobiography, a genre many consider highly problematic. She sees autobiography as a narrative of transformation--a text that presents the before and after of an individual's life. Focusing on autobiography as narrative, of something that happened to me, Barros highlights the various metamorphoses that are emplotted, bounded, and framed by the author's language and demonstrates that change is the operative metaphor in autobiographical discourse. The study focuses primarily on autobiographies from the rich Victorian period. Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*, as it self-consciously fictionalized the composition of Diogenes Teufelsdröckh's life narrative, provides a striking analog and paradigm for introducing the study and its methodological approach. Barros's major chapters on John Henry Cardinal Newman, John Stuart Mill, Charles Darwin, and Margaret Oliphant detail four very different types of autobiographical transformation--religious, philosophical, scientific, and literary, and in Barros's judgment establish benchmarks for considering autobiographies from antiquity to the present. A final chapter discusses autobiography's significance to an individual writer's corpus, to a particular culture, and finally to a history of narratives of transformation. *Autobiography: Narrative of Transformation* provides literary scholars with engaging as well as informative scholarship which offers new possibilities for expanded readings of the genre. Demonstrates the value of taking a rhetorical approach to lifewriting, whether one analyzes the earliest extant classical texts of Greek antiquity or the postmodern projects of Roland Barthes. --Mary Jean Corbett, Miami University Carolyn Barros is Associate Professor of English and

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